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Title: SCANNING ANTENNA WITH AUTOMATIC BEAM STABILIZATION ;

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ABSTRACT:

A external feedback network for decreasing variations in a beam pointing angle of a scanning antenna array. A dedicated aperture manifold is intergral with the aperture of the scanning antenna and provides a signal which represents the beam pointing angle. The signal is detected, decoded, and converted into digital data for averaging and processing by a CPU. The processed data is then compared with a value stored in memory and any difference forms the basis of a correction signal. For application to a microwave landing system, the correction signal is used to adjust the start/stop time of the scanning commands of the antenna to remove the error without modifying the beam steering algorithm. A space-coupled monitor may also be used independent of the feedback network to provide an alarm in response to any failure of the dedicated aperture manifold, the automatic stabilization circuitry or the array system.

(12)

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(54) Scanning antenna with automatic beam stabilization.

(57) A external feedback network (4, 5) for decreasing variations in a beam pointing angle of a scanning antenna array. A dedicated aperture manifold (4) is integral with the aperture (1) of the scanning antenna and provides a signal which represents the beam pointing angle. The signal is detected (13), decoded (15), and converted into digital data for averaging and processing by a central processing unit a (CPU). The processed data is then compared with a value stored in memory and any difference forms the basis of a correction signal. For application to a microwave landing system, the correction signal is used to adjust the start/stop time of the scanning commands of the antenna to remove the error without modifying the beam steering algorithm. A space-coupled monitor (6,7) may also be used independent of the feedback network to provide an alarm indication in response to any failure of the dedicated aperture manifold (4), the automatic stabilization circuitry (5) or the array system (1, 2, 8, 9, 11).

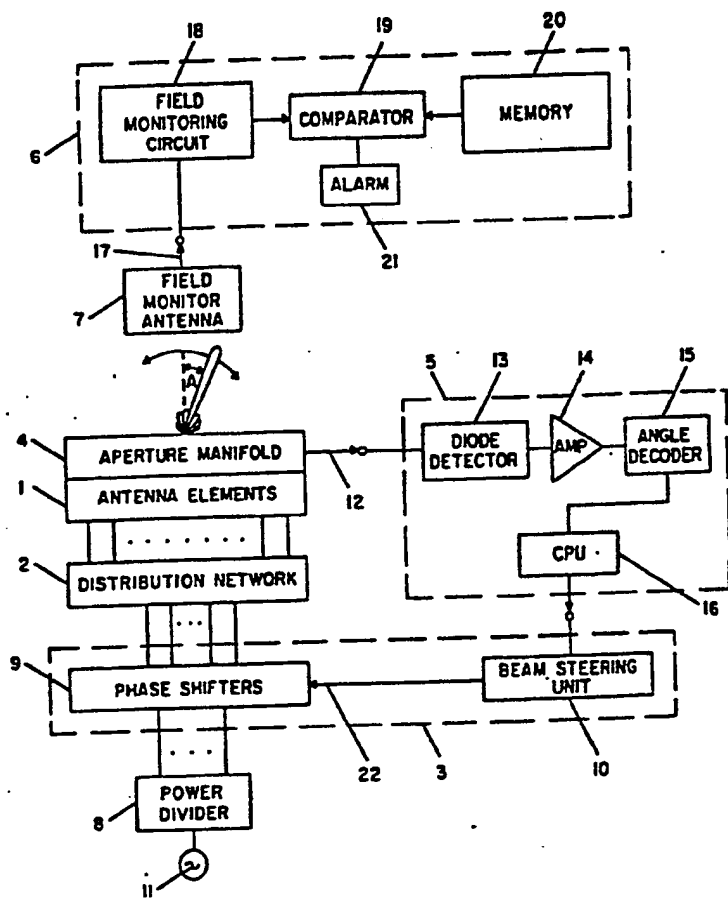


FIG. 1

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1 SCANNING ANTENNA WITH AUTOMATIC
2 BEAM STABILIZATION

3 The invention relates generally to
4 scanning antennas and, in particular, to apparatus for
5 automatically stabilizing the beam pointing accuracy
6 of a scanning phased array antenna.

7 Scanning antennas, and, particularly,
8 phased array antennas such as are found in microwave
9 landing systems, have used slotted waveguides that
10 monitor the aperture of the antenna. In phased
11 arrays, biasing error is independent of the angle in
12 space. In contrast, the angle error in beam port
13 antennas is angle dependent. Typically, these
14 waveguides are weakly coupled to the aperture and
15 could be used to manually detect the array beam
16 pointing bias error caused by RF phase perturbations in
17 the antenna circuitry such as from temperature changes,
18 temperature gradients and component degradation and
19 replacements.

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1 For a better understanding of the present
2 invention, together with other and further objects,
3 reference is made to the following description, taken
4 in conjunction with the accompanying drawings, and its
5 scope will be pointed out in the appended claims.

6 Figure 1 is a block diagram illustrating an
7 antenna system according to the invention.

8 The invention is applicable to microwave
9 landing systems which use wide scanning phased array
10 antennas and limited scan phased array antenna systems
11 having a sharp cut-off of the element pattern, such as
12 are disclosed by Frazita et al. in U.S. Patent No.
13 4,041,501, assigned to Hazeltine Corporation and
14 incorporated herein by reference. Referring to Figure
15 1, generally such antenna systems include one or more
16 radiating elements forming an array 1 in which the
17 elements are arranged along an array axis and are
18 spaced from each other by a given distance. Each of
19 the elements is coupled to a power divider 8 via a
20 corresponding one of a plurality of phase shifters 9
21 connected to the elements by distribution network 2.

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1 Wave energy signals from signal generator 11 and power
2 divider 8 are supplied to antenna elements 1 by phase
3 shifters 9 such that a proper selection of the
4 relative phase values for phase shifters 9 causes
5 antenna elements 12 to radiate a desired radiation
6 pattern into a selected angular region of space.
7 Variation of the relative phase values of the phase
8 shifters 9 is accomplished by beam steering unit 10
9 via control line 22 and causes the radiated antenna
10 pattern to change direction with respect to angle A in
11 space. Therefore, phase shifters 9 and beam steering
12 unit 10 together form means 3 for scanning a beam
13 radiated by the antenna elements of array 1 as a
14 result of the supplied wave energy signals from
15 generator 11 coupled to the elements of array 1 by
16 power divider 8 and distribution network 2.

17 The properties of a scanning antenna and
18 techniques for selecting design parameters such as
19 aperture length, element spacing and the particular
20 configuration of the distribution network 2 are well
21 known in the prior art. A review of these parameters
22 is completely described in U.S. Patent No. 4, 041,501
23 incorporated herein by reference.

24 In order to stabilize the beam pointing
25 angle of the radiated beam, an aperture manifold 4 is
26 associated with the antenna elements of array 1. The
27 manifold 4 may be any means for forming a signal

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1 provided by output 12 which represents a beam pointing
2 angle of the radiated beam. Preferably, manifold 4 is
3 a highly stable waveguide or manifold of special
4 design directly coupled to the array 1 and center-fed
5 to avoid inherent frequency (phase) and temperature
6 effects. Center feeding also eliminates first-order
7 dependence on frequency and absolute temperature
8 variations.

9 As used herein, manifold 4 refers to any
10 type of device for sampling signals including a
11 waveguide or a power combiner. A stable manifold is,
12 by definition, one which is insensitive to frequency
13 and temperature changes and is used in combination
14 with a phased array in accordance with this invention
15 to detect bias error at a specific angle. Manifold 4
16 is equivalent in function to a probe located in space
17 at a specific angle with respect to the phased array.
18 A manifold which may be used in accordance with the
19 present invention may be a slotted waveguide
20 configured to monitor radiated energy such that there
21 is zero phase at all sample points of the manifold.
22 This zero phase sampler at all points results in
23 center feeding of the manifold 4.

24 The output 12 of manifold 4 is coupled to
25 means 5, associated with means 3, for controlling the
26 scanning of the radiated beam in response to the
27 output 12 of monitor 4. Specifically, dedicated

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1 aperture manifold 4 may be a waveguide which is an
2 integral part of the scanning beam antenna array 1.
3 In microwave landing systems modulating according to
4 the format specified by the International Civil
5 Aviation Organization (ICAO), manifold 4 develops a
6 signal at output 12 representing the "TO-FRO" beam
7 radiated by the aperture of array 1. The signal
8 representing the "TO-FRO" beam is detected by diode
9 detector 13 and amplified by amplifier 14. The
10 detected, amplified signal is provided to an angle
11 decoder 15, such as a dwell gate processor, where the
12 signal representing the "TO-FRO" beam is decoded into
13 a beam pointing angle and converted into digital
14 data. The digital data is provided to CPU 16 for
15 processing. CPU 16 includes stabilization software
16 which determines the beam pointing direction of the
17 array from the data and compares it to a predetermined
18 value stored in memory. The difference between these
19 compared values represents correction data which is
20 applied to the beam steering unit 10. Unit 10
21 processes the correction data and uses it to adjust
22 phase shifter commands 22 thereby removing or
23 minimizing any beam pointing angle error which is
24 detected.

25 Means 5 controls the scanning of the radiated
26 beam in response to the output 12 of manifold 4. CPU
27 16 is programmed with the characteristics of the

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1 preamble and postamble of the scan. Diode detector 13,
2 amplifier 14 and angle decoder 15 detect the preamble
3 and postamble and provide this detected information to
4 CPU 16 which analyzes the information and begins a
5 clock running at the end of the preamble and stops the
6 clock at the end of the postamble. Between the
7 preamble and the postamble, diode detector 13,
8 amplifier 14 and angle decoder 15 continuously monitor
9 the scan angle of the beam radiated by the antenna
10 elements and being received by manifold 4. This
11 continuous monitoring information is provided to CPU
12 16 and is discreetly sampled. The sampled information
13 is processed by CPU 16 to determine the phase angle of
14 the radiated beam. This phase angle is compared to
15 the desired phase angle which is stored in the memory
16 of CPU 16 and any differential between the compared
17 angles is converted by CPU 16 into a control signal
18 which is sent to beam steering unit 10. Upon receipt
19 of the control signal, beam steering unit 10 adjusts
20 the phase shifter commands 22 in response to this
21 control signal. Preferably, the start/stop time of
22 the scanning beam may be adjusted in response to the
23 control signal thereby removing or minimizing any beam
24 pointing error which is detected. In this alternative

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1 configuration, modification of the beam steering
2 algorithm is avoided. This cycle is again repeated
3 with each scan.

4 As a result, means 5 for controlling the
5 scanning of the radiated beam in response to the
6 output 12 of manifold 4 accomplishes automatic beam
7 stabilization by circuitry which is independent of the
8 antenna elements in the form of detector 13, amplifier
9 14, decoder 15, and CPU 16 which respond to the output
10 12 of an external aperture monitor illustrated as
11 manifold 4. In the preferred embodiment, the control
12 signal provided by CPU 16 is used by beam steering
13 unit 10 to adjust the phase shifter commands 22 or the
14 start/stop time of the scanning beam, in the case of a
15 microwave landing system, so that the beam steering
16 algorithm is not modified by the automatic beam
17 stabilization of the invention.

18 Antenna elements 1 may be a slotted
19 waveguide cavity which is center-fed to avoid
20 frequency sensitivities within a 1.5% bandwidth. The
21 length of the waveguide cavity is configured to create
22 a standing wave wherein each wave has a constant
23 phase. This may be accomplished by a resonant feed
24 such as a line antenna feed (i.e., radiating antenna
25 feed). Each half-wavelength of the standing wave is
26 coupled to a radiating element (i.e., a slot in the
27 case of a slotted waveguide cavity). The waveguide is

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1 then ridge-loaded to provide the proper impedance
2 match. In the case of a slotted waveguide, the
3 ridge-loading is a ridge located within the waveguide
4 cavity. With such a waveguide configuration, absolute
5 power radiated by the waveguide may change according
6 to the radiated beam but relative power remains
7 constant. For this reason, the stable manifold may be
8 directly coupled to the waveguide for accurate
9 monitoring of the biasing error.

10 The antenna system according to the
11 invention may also be provided with separate and
12 independent means 6, including field monitor antenna
13 7, for monitoring a beam pointing angle of the
14 radiated beam and providing an output signal 17
15 representative thereof. Field monitor 7 may be a
16 space-coupled monitor connected to field monitoring
17 circuit 18 which converts output 17 into corresponding
18 field signal 23 having a predetermined scale and
19 magnitude. Circuit 18 provides output information to
20 comparator 19 which also receives output information
21 from memory 20. Memory 20 stores information relating
22 to the acceptable beam pointing angle at any instant.
23 Comparator 20 compares the output of field monitoring
24 circuit 18 with information sampled from memory 20 and
25 actuates an alarm 21 in the event that the comparison

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1 is beyond preset limits. Therefore, means 6 and
2 monitor 7 can be used to independently detect failure
3 of the manifold, the automatic stabilization circuitry
4 or the array system.

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WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1 Claim 1. An antenna system for radiating
2 wave energy signals into a selected region of space
3 and in a desired radiation pattern comprising an
4 aperture comprising an array of antenna elements (1),
5 coupler (2, 8) for providing supplied wave energy
6 signals to the antenna elements, and beam scanner (3)
7 for scanning a beam radiated by the array in
8 accordance with a beam steering algorithm, said beam
9 resulting from the supplied wave energy signals
10 coupled to the antenna elements, characterized by:
11 (a) beam pointing angle detector (4, 5) for
12 forming a signal representative of the
13 beam pointing angle;
14 and
15 (b) beam steering unit (10), associated with
16 said detector (4, 5), for controlling the
17 scanning of the radiated beam in response
18 to the signal of the detector (4, 5),
19 thereby automatically stabilizing the beam
20 pointing angle of the radiated beam.

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1 Claim 2. The antenna of claim 1 wherein
2 said detector (4, 5) comprises a first manifold (4)
3 directly coupled to said aperture and providing an
4 output representative of the beaming pointing angle of
5 a beam radiated by said aperture.

1 Claim 3. The antenna of claim 1 or 2
2 further comprising a monitor (6, 7), independent
3 of the antenna elements (1) and the signals applied
4 to the elements, of the radiated beam providing an
5 output representative of the beam pointing angle.

1 Claim 4. The antenna of claim 3 wherein
2 said monitor comprises a second manifold (7)
3 indirectly coupled to said aperture and providing an
4 output representative of the beaming pointing angle of
5 a beam radiated by said aperture.

1 Claim 5. The antenna of claim 4 wherein
2 said second manifold (7) comprises a space coupled
3 monitor.

1 Claim 6. The antenna of claim 5 further
2 comprising an alarm (6) for providing an alarm
3 indication in response to a particular output of the
4 space-coupled monitor.

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1 Claim 7. The antenna of claim 6 wherein
2 said alarm comprises a field monitoring circuit (18)
3 coupled to said first manifold (7), memory (20) for
4 providing information indicative of a predetermined,
5 acceptable beam pointing angle, comparator (19) for
6 comparing outputs of the field monitoring circuit
7 (18) and the information in memory (20), and an alarm
8 (21) responsive to particular compared outputs.

1 Claim 8. The antenna of claim 1 or 2
2 wherein said beam steering unit (10) comprises
3 detector (13) for detecting the output of the beam
4 steering angle detector (4, 5), decodor (15)
5 associated with said detector for providing an output
6 corresponding to the beam pointing angle represented
7 by the detected output of the beam steering angle
8 detector (4, 5), and CPU (16) for controlling the
9 angle of scan of the radiated beam in response to the
10 decodor (13).

1 Claim 9. The antenna of claim 8 wherein
2 said CPU (16) adjusts the start/stop time of said
3 scanning beam whereby the beam steering algorithm
4 is not modified.

1 Claim 10. The antenna of claim 9 wherein
2 said decodor (13) comprises a dwell gate processor.

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1 Claim 11. The antenna of claim 10 wherein
2 said beam scanner (3) comprises a plurality of phase
3 shifters (9) controlled by a beam steering unit (10)
4 and having inputs and outputs associated with said
5 coupler (2, 8).

1 Claim 12. The antenna of claim 11 wherein
2 said coupler (2, 8) comprises a distribution network
3 (2) coupling the outputs of said phase shifters (9)
4 and said antenna elements (1) and a power divider (8)
5 having outputs coupled to the inputs of said phase
6 shifters (9) and an input for coupling to supplied
7 wave energy signals (11).

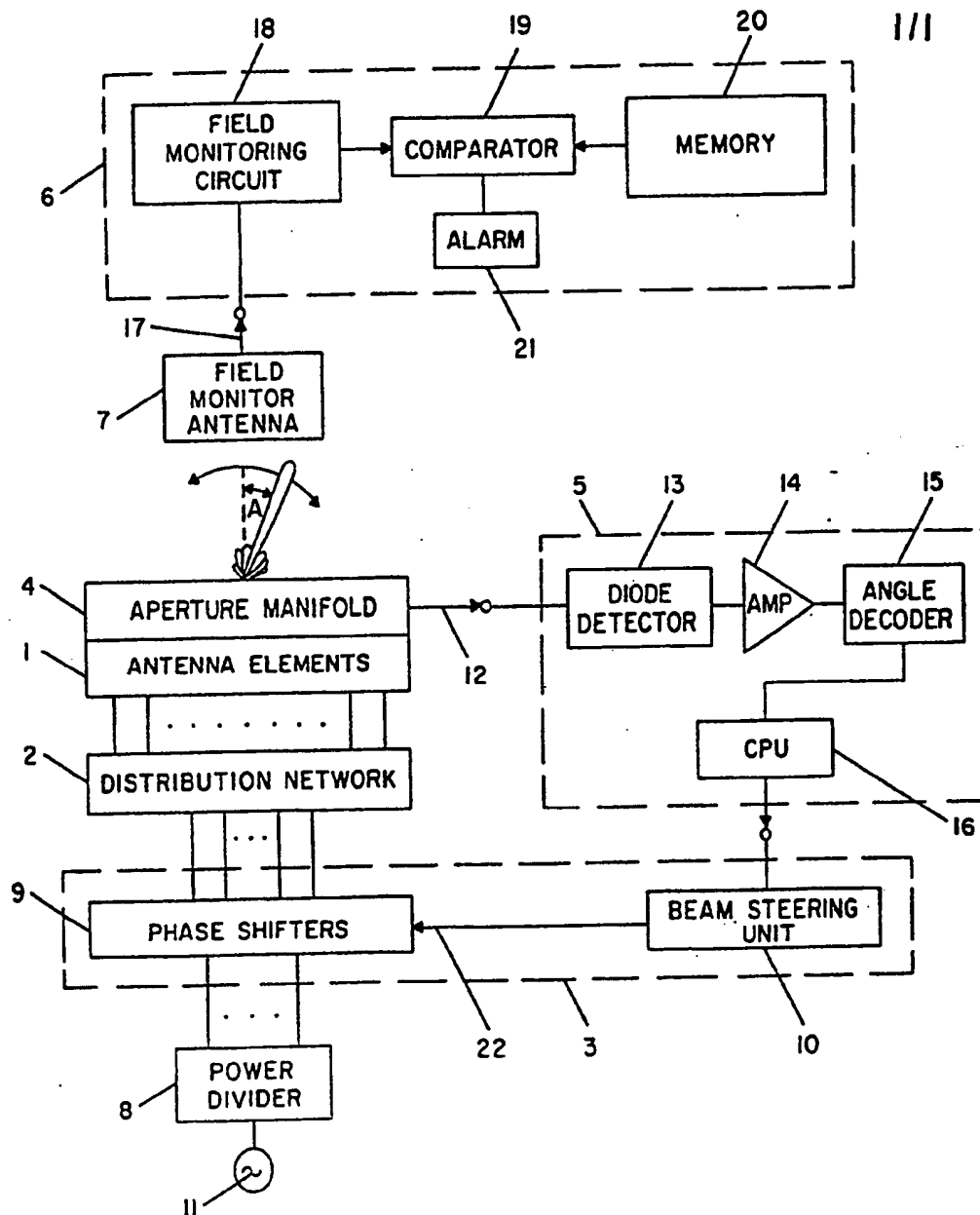


FIG. 1



European Patent
Office

EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT

0106438

Application number

EP 83 30 4471

DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT			
Category	Citation of document with indication, where appropriate, of relevant passages	Relevant to claim	CLASSIFICATION OF THE APPLICATION (Int. Cl. 7)
A	Patent Abstracts of Japan vol. 6, no. 132, 17 July 1982 & JP-A-57-57005	1	H 01 Q 3/36
A	--- AU-B- 508 390 (COMMONWEALTH SCIENTIFIC AND INDUSTRIAL RESEARCH ORGANISATION) * Figures 2, 3 *	3,5,6	
A	--- IEEE TRANSACTIONS ON ANTENNAS AND PROPAGATION, vol. AP-28, no. 6, November 1980, New York C.N. DORNAY et al. "Cohering of an experimental nonrigid array by self-survey", pages 902-904 * Page 903; figure 1 *	1	
A	--- US-A-4 041 501 (R.F. FRAZITA et al.) * Figure 6 *		TECHNICAL FIELDS SEARCHED (Int. Cl. 7)
D		11,12	H 01 Q 3/26 H 01 Q 3/30 H 01 Q 3/34 H 01 Q 3/36
A	--- DE-A-2 904 095 (HAZELTINE) * Figure 2 *		
A	--- US-A-4 343 006 (P.J. McVEIGH et al.) * Figure 2 *		
The present search report has been drawn up for all claims			
Place of search BERLIN		Date of completion of the search 11-11-1983	Examiner BREUSING J
CATEGORY OF CITED DOCUMENTS		T : theory or principle underlying the invention E : earlier patent document, but published on, or after the filing date D : document cited in the application L : document cited for other reasons & : member of the same patent family, corresponding document	
X : particularly relevant if taken alone Y : particularly relevant if combined with another document of the same category A : technological background O : non-written disclosure P : intermediate document			